(b) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the department to own their own buildings; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the budget allocation for the purpose for the year 2007-08?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) At present 589 post offices and 13 Central Telegraph Offices/Telegraph Offices/Telecommunications Centres are housed in rented buildings in Punjab. However, BSNL have planned to shift one Telegraph Office functioning at Sangrur from rented building to its own building.

(b) Yes, Sir. There is a scheme under Eleventh Five Year Plan to provide funds for construction of post office buildings in the Department of Posts.

As regards telegraph offices there is no such proposal under consideration in the Department of Telecommunications.

(c) No funds for new projects have been allocated for the year 2007-08 in the Department of Posts, as the proposal for new projects for Eleventh Five Year Plan has not been approved as yet. However, an amount of Rs. 1393.40 lakhs has been allotted all over the country for 2007-08 to complete construction of ongoing post office projects of Tenth Five Year Plan, out of which Rs.85.50 lakhs has been allotted to Punjab.

As regards telegraph offices, the question does not arise in view of (b) above.

Procurement of switching equipment

1866. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether delays in procurement of switching equipment to augment capacity of Cell One's GSM (Global Standard for Mobile Communication) has led to the Public Sector Undertaking BSNL slipping to the No.3 position in the cellular industry as Airtel continued to be No.1 and Vodafone moving to No.2 position;

(b) whether 45.5 million BSNL Cell One connections could not be given, due to delay in procuring switching equipment; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Sir, equipment procuremtmt efforts for BSNL's new mobile network expansion project received a setback with one of the bidders approaching the Hon'ble High Court against the decision of BSNL rejecting his bid. Due to delay in procurement efforts and capacity constraints, BSNL growth has been comparatively lesser resulting in BSNL slipping to 3rd position among GSM operators. However, BSNL has now placed an Advanced Purchase Order (APO) on the successful bidder. It is expected that APO will be accepted soon and enable BSNL to be competitive in the market and regain its market share.